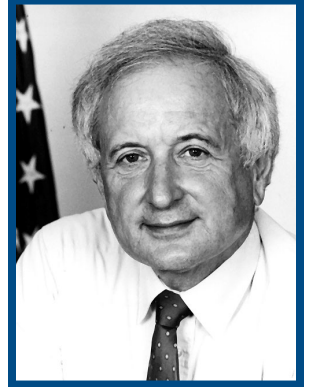


12th District Report

A LEGISLATIVE & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Congressman Sandy Levin



Dear Friends:

Our nation faces serious challenges at home and abroad. Millions are out of work; the federal budget, which had been balanced from 1998 to 2001, is back in the red; and our servicemen and women continue to face danger every day in Iraq.

I want you to know where I stand on key issues. I also want you to have all the facts to inform your own decisions. I've included an overview of some of the issues pending in Congress. I hope you will consider joining me during our upcoming Spring Town Hall meeting series to let me know what you think about these and other issues. You can also sign up to receive regular e-mail updates from my office.

I want to make sure that you are aware of the services provided by my office. Whether you want to call us about a federal issue or a problem you are having with a federal agency, we are here to assist you. Do not hesitate to be in touch.

I hope this information is helpful. My most important job is to listen to your views, stand up for you in Washington, and assist you at home.

Best wishes,

Sandy
Sandy Levin

The Manufacturing Jobs Crisis

The U.S. economy has lost an average of 61,000 jobs a month over the past 3 years. The picture is even worse in the critical manufacturing sector. The economy has shed over 2.5 million manufacturing jobs since 2001. There has been a 48 percent drop in manufacturing job openings.

In Washington you hear talk of an economic "recovery." But at home I hear from so many individuals, unemployed through no fault of their own, who are applying for jobs and finding hundreds of other applicants. This has been a jobless recovery.

Economists estimate that we need to add about 150,000 jobs per month just to keep up with population growth. Yet between August and January (the only six-month period with any positive job growth), the economy added just 50,100 jobs on average per month, not nearly enough to keep up with population growth let alone replace lost jobs. In Michigan, the picture was even bleaker with the state economy continuing to lose on average 10,340 jobs each month during this period.

I have been actively involved in promoting concrete steps the federal government should take to address the manufacturing jobs crisis. Last fall I joined in sending a letter to the President calling on him to support 14 initiatives to do just that. These action items include controlling health care and pension costs, shaping international trade to the benefit of U.S. workers and businesses, closing loopholes for corporations that move offshore to avoid paying U.S. taxes, increasing

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National

	December 2000	November 2003
Manufacturing jobs	17.2 million	14.3 million
Unemployment rate	3.9%	5.9%
People looking for work per job opening	2.5	4.8
Real wage growth	1.6%	-0.3%

Unemployed Workers Call on Washington to Act

I don't care about the moon. I want a job," one of Southeast Michigan's thousands of unemployed workers said to me a few weeks ago. He's not alone.

Michigan's unemployment rate is currently 7.2 percent, the third highest in the nation. Jobs in all sectors of the economy are hard to find. We have a federal unemployment insurance program to get the families of these workers through these tough economic times until they find a job.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in Congress let the program end in December. As a result, 350,000 unemployed workers in our nation — the highest number in the history of the program — ran out of unemployment insurance benefits in January without finding work.

In previous recessions, Congress continued providing benefits until there were enough jobs available, but this time the program ended with the num-

ber of unemployed workers per job opening 25 percent higher than it was when the recession started.

I am fighting to re-start the

unemployment insurance program. Even though the trust fund set aside for this purpose has a balance of over \$15 billion, the House leadership still refuses to allow a vote on this issue. To force action over their opposition, I have signed a "discharge petition" to require an up or down vote on re-starting the federal program. We are still 17 signatures short of the 218 required, but

I will keep working to persuade my colleagues about the need for action. The complete list of Members who signed the petition is posted No. 4 at <http://clerk.house.gov/legisAct/votes.php>



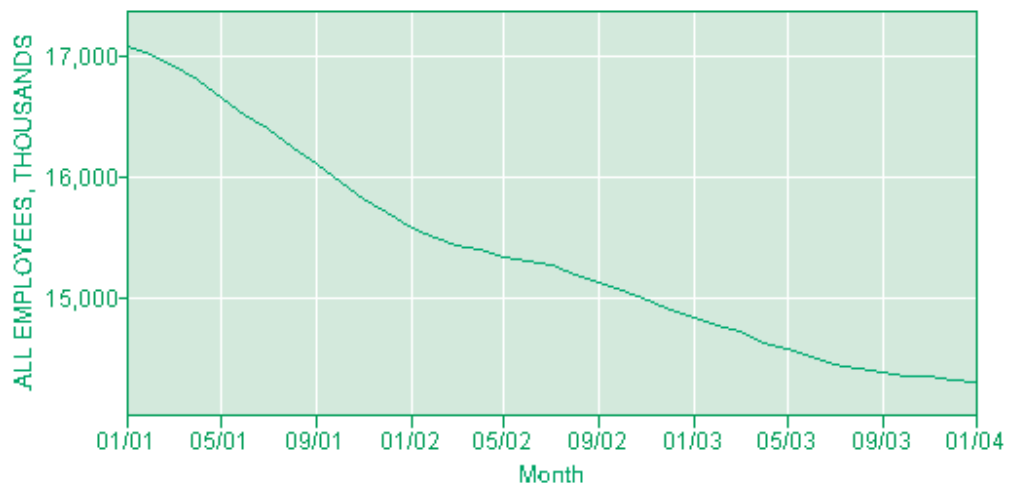
Congressman Levin speaks at an event at the Capitol about unemployment insurance.

The Manufacturing Jobs Crisis *continued from page 1*

funding for research, development and advanced technologies, and supporting programs that help manufacturers remain competitive.

Six months ago, President Bush announced plans to appoint a "manufacturing czar" to find solutions to the problem, but the position remained unfilled as we write this newsletter. A recent report from the President's Council of Economic Advisors asserted that the job shift was healthy for the economy because "when a good or service is produced more cheaply abroad, it makes more sense to import it than make or provide it domestically; [o]utsourcing is just a new way of doing international trade. . . . More things are tradable than were tradable in the past and that's a good thing."

I don't accept this passive approach that has not stopped the national manufacturing job loss charted below and I will keep fighting for specific action by the federal government.



Securing Our Homeland

After the horrific terrorist attacks of 9-11, the country pulled together and we began making our homeland more secure. We enacted legislation to overhaul our airport security; we provided new border control measures; we created the Department of Homeland Security.

Despite the steps that have been taken, much more needs to be done.

I am working to ensure that the State of Michigan receives the necessary federal money and that those funds are focused within the state on critical areas and projects. I also support efforts to grant federal money directly to our local first responders. These are the police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel that are on the front lines of homeland security.

Last fiscal year, seven fire departments in the 12th Congressional District received funds through the "Assistance to Firefighters" grants. Below are examples of how important these upgrades are to our local communities. I am also working with both Macomb county and Oakland county on vital efforts to upgrade radio communication systems.

Better Roads, Better Jobs

The average adult American spends nearly an hour behind the wheel every day. Pot-holes and ruts slow our commutes, damage our cars, and increase pollution. In our state, a big part of the problem is that Michigan does not get its fair share of federal road funds.

We must correct this problem in 2004 when Congress is scheduled to extend the federal law funding roads and transit. I support legislation guaranteeing that Michigan will get more of the gas taxes we send to the federal government so we can continue making the infrastructure improvements essential to our roads and our economy.

Every \$1 billion in federal highway investment directly or indirectly supports up to 47,500 jobs.

Roseville – \$41,553

Roseville will buy three foam dispensing systems and pumping apparatus for their fire trucks. These systems will allow the trucks to pump water more efficiently and dispense foam at the push of a button. Foam, which helps suppress fire by separating the fuel from the air, can prove invaluable at both standard house fires and fuel fires on roads and highways.

Ferndale – \$48,150

Ferndale will replace their twenty-five year old portable field radios. The Department currently has one radio for every three firefighters—this funding will help provide one radio for every two firefighters. The grant will also replace their 25-year-old self-contained breathing apparatus and allow their air tanks to be filled more rapidly.

LOCAL STORY INSPIRES CANCER BILL

At the end of 2002, Sheryl Silver called my office with a personal and important story to tell. Her sister, Johanna, lived and taught school in our area until her tragic death from ovarian cancer in 2000.

Johanna was active and health-conscious – the daughter of a doctor – but she did not recognize her early symptoms. By the time her cancer was diagnosed, it was too late. Sheryl was determined to prevent what happened to her sister from happening to other women.

We discovered that Johanna's story was all too common. Ovarian cancer, the deadliest of the gynecologic cancers, has a 90 percent survival rate if detected very early (stage 1) and only a 20 percent survival rate if detected very late (stage 3 or 4). Only 25-30 percent of cases are currently diagnosed before the woman has entered stage 3.

I teamed up with Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX) to introduce Johanna's Law, a federal information campaign to increase early detection of these deadly cancers, and, when possible, help women reduce their risk in the first place. The legislation takes a two-pronged approach: national PSAs directed at all women; and grants to local and national organizations who work with women and doctors.

We are working with our colleagues in Congress to pass Johanna's Law and educate the public about gynecologic cancers. But please don't wait. Talk to your physician about your risk of gynecologic cancer today, and encourage all the women you love to do the same.

REPRESENTATIVE

Here to Listen to You

SPRING 2004 TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Warren

Saturday, April 3rd

10:00 a.m.

Warren Community Center
5460 Arden
*[West of Mound,
south of 14 Mile]*

St. Clair Shores

Wednesday, April 7th

7:00 p.m.

Blossom Heath Inn
24800 Jefferson
*[Between 9 and
10 Mile Roads]*

Ferndale

Monday, April 26th

6:30 p.m.

Kulick Community Center
1201 Livernois
*[South of 9 Mile,
West of Livernois]*

Clinton Township

Saturday, May 1st

10:00 a.m.

Clinton-Macomb Library
40900 Romeo Plank Road
[South of Canal Road]

Southfield

Monday, May 3rd

7:00 p.m.

Southfield Public Library
26300 Evergreen Road
*[East of Evergreen,
South of I-696]*

***Please RSVP to 586-498-7122
or 248-968-2025***

*We encourage your participation
at any town hall meeting most
convenient to you.*

SANDY LEVIN

Here to Assist You

Assistance with Federal Agencies

Federal agencies are not always easy to access. So if you need assistance, for example, in receiving a missed Social Security check, obtaining military records, applying for a visa, or resolving any other problem with a federal agency, we may be able to help.

Organizations & Meetings

Staff in our District office stay in regular touch with community organizations, attend numerous meetings and events, and represent me when I am in Washington. Please contact us if you feel our attendance or involvement may be appropriate and helpful.

Flags & Washington Tours



If you plan to visit our nation's capital, we urge you to contact us at least six weeks in advance of your trip. We may be able to provide House gallery passes and tours of the U.S. Capitol and other Washington attractions. We can also provide, at cost, flags flown over the U.S. Capitol.



Success Story

A constituent's disability benefits had been miscalculated because of Worker's Compensation benefits received years ago. The Social Security Administration reviewed the case, reassessed the monthly payments and increased the monthly benefits from \$431 to \$731—an increase of \$300 a month. The constituent also received a \$4,375 payment to make up for the months the check was too low.

Success Story

My office was contacted by an officer in the U.S. Air Force with an emergency situation. His wife was scheduled to have exploratory surgery in just three days, but TRICARE, the health insurance program for military service members, and their families, had just informed her that her surgeon had been removed from their "approved list" and her surgery would have to be rescheduled. Because TRICARE is a federal contractor, my office was able to ask them to reevaluate the case, and they decided to honor their commitment to cover the surgery as scheduled. I was pleased to hear that the surgery turned out well, too.

Information & Publications

We can often help you locate publications, research reports, consumer guides, informative brochures, legislative background papers, and bills produced by the government

Keeping Our Promises to America's Veterans

The United States has a solemn obligation to support the men and women who have protected us by serving in the Armed Forces. Low funding levels for veterans services make these promises hard to keep.

In the Detroit area last year, more than 15,000 veterans were forced to wait more than 30 days for an initial doctor's appointment at a VA medical center. The Bush Administration budget does not even keep pace with medical inflation and will do nothing to help veterans see their physicians more quickly.

The Administration budget calls for an annual health enrollment fee of \$250 for certain veterans, more than doubles the prescription drug co-pay for these same veterans, and makes cuts in nursing home, medical research, and medical facility construction programs. Congress rightly rejected these proposals last year. I will oppose them again this year.

The proposed budget also fails to allow veterans who retire with 20 years of service and who also have a service-connected disability to receive both the full military retirement pay and VA disability benefits they earned. I support providing concurrent receipt to all eligible veterans. This legislation has an overwhelming 373 cosponsors but no action has been taken. I have joined 203 of my colleagues in signing a discharge petition to force a vote. We are 14 Members short of the 218 needed.

These issues and others could also be addressed by passing the Salute to Veterans & Armed Forces Act [H.R. 2569]. This legislation reduces the waiting time for veterans to see their doctors to a maximum of 14 days, provides full concurrent receipt, speeds up the VA disability claims appeals process, enhances educational benefits for Reservists, and expands outreach to veterans about their benefits and rights.

Veterans Town Hall Issues & Services

Monday, June 7th
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

VFW Post 2358

25671 Gratiot

[Just South of I-696]

Roseville

*Please RSVP to 586-498-7122
or 248-968-2025.*

*Call now and we will send you
a reminder notice.*

Water Resources Worth Protecting

We are fortunate to have one of the Great Lakes' crown jewels right in our backyard. Lake St. Clair provides drinking water, fishing, and recreation to millions every year.

Over the last decades this jewel was taken for granted and the quality and economic value of the Lake was imperiled by faulty sewage and septic systems, combined sewer overflows, toxic contamination, invasive species, beach closings, and other problems.

Through combined local, state, and federal efforts we are making progress. Over the last couple of years, the number of beach closings

on Lake St. Clair has dramatically declined. The chronic problem of combined sewer overflows into the Lake is being addressed. Illicit drain connections that dump raw sewage into Lake St. Clair are being tracked down and repaired.

But there is still more to do. All of us can help protect and enhance the environmental quality of Lake St. Clair and its watershed. I introduced a bipartisan resolution in the House of Representatives to affirm Lake St. Clair's status as a critical part of the Great Lakes system, and urge more actions to protect this vital resource.

Recently, many of my efforts have

focused on working with Oakland and Macomb Counties, as well as the Clinton River Watershed Council to improve water quality in the Clinton River. The Clinton River is the 2nd largest tributary of Lake St. Clair. A healthier Clinton River means a healthier Lake St. Clair.

Congress recently approved \$675,000 I requested to fund a new, watershed-wide effort to improve water quality in the Clinton River Watershed. I am also working to win a watershed initiative grant from the Environmental Protection Agency that would help fix leaky septic tanks that leach pollution into the river.

New Law Fundamentally Changes Medicare

In December, the President signed into law a bill I voted against that makes significant changes to the Medicare program.

The law creates a voluntary private insurance prescription drug program which is estimated to pay about 1/3 of an average senior's drug costs.

The new law changes Medicare's structure in many ways, potentially making it more difficult for seniors to stay with the Medicare they know and trust. The Congressional Budget Office also predicts that 3 million or more seniors might lose their current drug coverage as a result of the new law.

It continues the ban on buying drugs from Canada. The FDA has announced plans to crack down on imports, particularly over the Internet.

I have serious reservations about the new law. I supported an alternative approach where Medicare would cover prescription drugs the way it covers other services, without requiring seniors to buy private insurance or changing the basic Medicare program.

I believe the new law cannot be "fixed" with minor changes. Congress must repeal the law and start over. In the meantime, I am supporting legislation to repeal the

Medicare Bill

Timeline of Major Changes

- 2004** Federal payments to HMOs increase by \$3 billion
Drug discount cards available for \$30 – discounts not guaranteed
- 2005** Doctor visit (Part B) deductible increases
- 2006** Drug insurance available from private companies
- 2007** All beneficiaries required to provide complete financial information to Medicare *(even if not enrolled in drug program)*
- 2010** Voucher demonstration begins for 6.8 million Medicare beneficiaries

ban on Medicare negotiating lower drug prices and legislation to make sure Michigan is not part of the voucher demonstration that could force seniors into HMOs for their entire coverage under Medicare.

The new Medicare law provides funds to explain the complex process of buying drug insurance from private companies – starting in November of 2005.

Yet the Administration has chosen to begin spending \$10 million now to promote this law even though benefits are not yet available to seniors. I believe the ads are misleading and constitute a misuse of taxpayer money. ABC and CBS required HHS to correct some of the ads' inaccuracies. The General Accounting Office is also investigating to see if the ad campaign is a legal use of taxpayer dollars.

Success Story

A constituent was saddled with huge medical bills dating back to July 2001. There was a conflict between Medicare and the constituent's other insurance company. Each insurer denied being the primary insurer, leaving the constituent in a bind. My office was able to sort out the dispute, and the constituent's bills were paid.

For more information, contact the State Health Insurance Counseling Program at 800-803-7174 or call my office.

M.C.
PRSRT STD

Jon M. Levin

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Official Business



12th District Report



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Sander
Levin

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TOLL FREE 1-888-810-3880
www.house.gov/levin

Let me Know Your Opinion



Write me a letter with your opinion on federal issues or a personal experience which has shaped your view. We'll get these letters quicker if you send them to our local offices.



Send me an email: Log on to my website at www.house.gov/levin and send me an electronic message. We will respond to you by email as well.

Call my office. I ask staff in all three offices to carefully record the opinions that are phoned in and forward them on to me.



Fax me a letter. If the issue is time sensitive, please feel free to fax me your letter as well.



Attend a town hall meeting, or stop-by one of our offices.

Sign Up to Receive Our New Electronic Newsletter



I am going to begin sending out a monthly e-newsletter. It will provide a similar legislative update as this newsletter. Please visit my website to add your name to our email list.